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ABSTRACT

This brochure is presented in the context of the "back to basics" movement to draw attention to the fact that the basics of a good education are skills that will enable people to live more effectively in the world of the future and that study of a foreign language contributes to the development of these skills. Basics are defined as abilities, such as problem-solving, coping and learning to learn, and human qualities, such as understanding, respect for others and self-respect. A community's brief description in terms of these "basics" is given of four innovative foreign language programs: career education, exploratory language, bilingual education and immersion programs. Other evidence is also offered in support of the value of foreign language education, namely, facts about increased foreign travel, an excerpt from the executive order of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies and a table showing results of research on the relationship between foreign languages and basic skills and attitudes. (AMH)

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ED163801

LEARNING

CHARACTER

READING

ETHNICS ? ? WRITING

CITIZEN-
SHIP

SELF-
REALIZATION

AND

ARITHMETIC

?

INTER-
PERSONAL
SKILLS ?

CAREER
VOCATIONAL
TRAINING

?

REASONING
SKILLS

LEARNING
HOW TO
LEARN

PROBLEM
SOLVING
SKILLS

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THE BASICS

☐ ☐ Yes No Do you often feel that schools should return to an emphasis on reading, writing, and arithmetic?

How would most people in your community answer that question?

☐ ☐ Yes No Do you believe that the BASICS include reasoning skills, interpersonal skills, career awareness, or learning how to learn?

Would most educators whom you know agree with you?

☐ ☐ Yes No Do you know some of the ways that studying foreign languages contributes to the BASICS? And that there is research evidence to support this claim?

But how are we defining the BASICS?

HOW HAVE EDUCATORS DEFINED THE BASICS?

"The four basics are: coping skills, character or social development, citizenship, and private realization." *(Arthur W. Foshay, Teachers College, Columbia University)*

"My notion of the basics assumes that our schooling system should be concerned with literacy in words and numbers. It also acknowledges that our educational system will be moving toward another set of basics: truth, beauty, justice, love, and faith." *(James G. Cook, President, Thomas Alva Edison Foundation)*

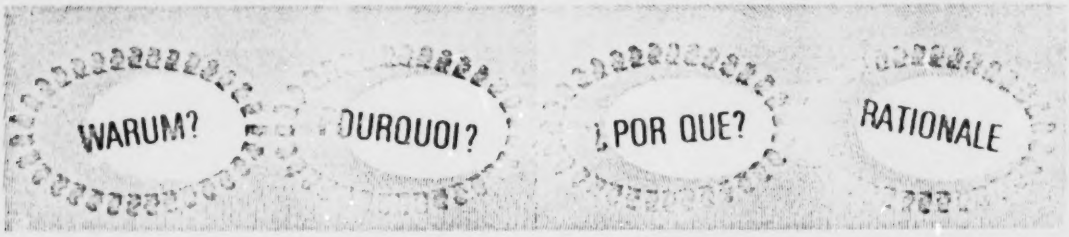
"The first business of the schools is to equip all children with the skills, tools, and attitudes that will lay the basis for learning now and in the future." *(Ben Brodinsky, Educational Consultant)*

"Basic and essential as they are, skills remain only tools with which to manage the multifaceted business of learning, living, and surviving." *(Fred Hechinger,* The New York Times*)*

"While we recognize the national centrality of such languages as English and mathematics in cries of 'Back to the Basics,' we too often forget that instruction in foreign languages is basic to involvement in a larger world. Access to foreign language study is imperative for American students." *(Ward Hellstrom, President, Florida Association of Departments of English)*

"Today, the practical value to Americans of foreign languages is greater than ever — in business, government, and services in the growing global community." (Council for Basic Education Bulletin, *December 1977)*

"Too much concentration on the Three R's may result in too little attention to other important basic subjects: science, foreign languages, and the arts in particular." *(George Weber, Associate Director, Council for Basic Education)*



Too often we fail to recognize the contributions that foreign language study makes to the total development of the individual. The purpose of this brochure is to draw attention to the fact that the basics of a good education are skills which will enable people to live more effectively in the world of the future, and that study of a foreign language contributes to the development of these skills.

We are presently being swept up by a back-to-basics movement, which also recognizes what is basic to learning, basic to growing, basic to living a full and meaningful life. Basics are not just subjects, such as reading, writing, and mathematics, but include abilities such as problem-solving, coping, and learning to learn, and human qualities such as understanding, respect for others, and self-respect.

How the basics are defined in your community will determine the role of foreign languages in your schools. Reach out to expand people's ideas so that they include an appreciation of the value of language study. Read on for more information on how foreign languages play an important role in basic education.

Are you aware of some of the innovative programs in foreign languages that are leading to the development of basic skills?

Four of the most dynamic are:

Career Education: A growing recognition of the importance of foreign language as an auxiliary skill has stimulated the introduction of many career-oriented courses at the awareness, exploration, and experience levels into foreign language programs in secondary schools, colleges, and universities.

Exploratory Language: Courses which offer students an introduction to language and culture in general are becoming widespread. These courses prepare students to study and enjoy a foreign language by emphasizing acquisition skills and appreciation for other cultures. Ethnic awareness is developed through attention to the students' own backgrounds and involvement of citizens from the community.

Bilingual Education: Bilingual education includes instruction in content and two languages through two languages. In many of our communities, students' needs are met via programs which seek to build upon their dual cultural and linguistic environment. The response to these needs allows us to enchance basic skills in language and computation; it also helps move the student toward greater self-actualization.

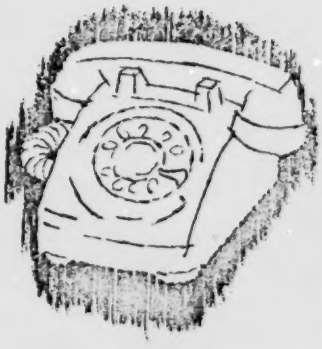
Immersion Programs: Immersion programs involve teaching content through a foreign language to English-speaking students at various educational levels. These vary in type, but the basic ingredient of all is extensive contact with the foreign language. Students may spend either a half-day or a full day for a semester or a year or the elementary grades learning subject matter through a foreign language.

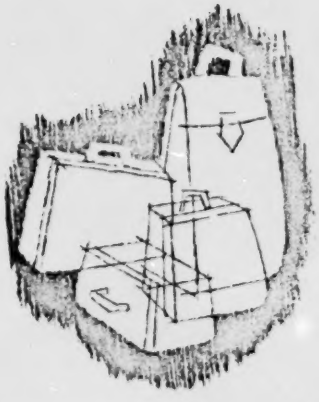
Yes, the world is getting smaller!

Did you know that

——a trip across the Atlantic took 17½ hours in 1947 compared to 3½ hours today?

——only 900,000 overseas telephone calls were made in 1950 compared to 60,636,000 in 1975?





——only 651,000 Americans traveled overseas in 1950 compared to 6,263,000 in 1975; or that only 288,000 foreigners visited the United States in 1950 compared to 3,700,000 in 1975?

——only 40,700 foreign students studied in the United States in 1955 compared to 203,068 in 1977; or that only 9,900 United States students studied abroad in 1955 compared to 34,200 in 1977?

Executive Order 12054

April 21, 1978

President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies

The objectives of the Commission shall be to:

(1) Recommend means for directing public attention to the importance of foreign language and international studies for the improvement of communications and understanding with other nations in an increasingly interdependent world;

(2) Assess the need in the United States for foreign language and area specialists, ways in which foreign language and international studies contribute to meeting these needs, and the job market for individuals with these skills;

(3) Recommend what foreign language area studies programs are appropriate at all academic levels and recommend desirable levels and kinds of support for each that should be provided by the public and private sectors;

(4) Review existing legislative authorities and make recommendations for changes needed to carry out most effectively the Commission's recommendations.

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WHAT RESEARCH STUDIES SHOW

ABOUT FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND THE BASICS

BASIC SKILLS AND ATTITUDES					
ENGLISH VOCABULARY	Performance of Latin pupils on Iowa Vocabulary subtest was one full year higher than the performance of matched control pupils. (1)	FL teaches context and structural cues to vocabulary. (2)	FL study increases English vocabulary. (3)	Mean gain in vocabulary for FL students was eight months in comparison with control group of six months. (4)	SATS, English grades and English Vocab. Exam were higher for those studying FL. (5)
READING SKILLS	FL students score higher in reading achievement: vocabulary, cognitive learning, and total reading ability. (3)	Reading Skills improved (11% over control group) where students were taught Latin. (6)	Reading skills are shown to be transferable from one language to another. (7)	Reading Comprehension improved by 14 months when taught Latin. (8)	
TRANSFER	Reading skills are transferable from one language to another. (7)	Speed reading in native tongue has transfer to second language learning. (12)	Students learn inferencing skills and other cognitive processes through FL study. (13)	Students learn how languages are related via a comparative study of Romance languages vocabulary. (14)	
SELF-CONCEPT	Travel abroad enhanced student cultural awareness and self-concept. (10)	Attitudes toward self and the native language group were positively correlated with attained proficiency in ESL. (11)	The self-concept of control group students was significantly higher for language pupils than non-language pupils. (4)		
CULTURAL ENRICHMENT	Survey of pupils, parents, principals and classroom teachers showed the program had wide acceptance and support. (1)	Bilingual Education opportunities available to monolingual children. (French, Spanish, German) (9)			
CREATIVITY	International Baccalaureate provided to gifted students in public high schools. (15)	Students scored significantly higher on tests of creativity (figural fluency and figurals flexibility). (5)			
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	FL study develops pupil's auditory discrimination and memory. (2)	FL courses which emphasize grammar as a process or method of transferring shed light on native language grammar. (16)			

KEY: Numbers refer to references identified at the right. Please consult references for further information on each citation.

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FORWARD TO THE BASICS OF THE FUTURE

What are the basics for future living? What will they be? What should they be? Will they be the same basics set into a different time frame? Are there basics which have universality?

All human beings have the innate life force that drives them toward self-realization, toward growth, toward learning. This life force can be positively directed by wise teachers so that it produces education which leads to the improvement of human lives. Our school curricula and teaching strategies must reflect these principles.

If we can teach young people to live more effectively, to have personal integrity, to be competent in their everyday world, to have good interpersonal skills, to be comfortable with themselves, to be able to respect and appreciate others and to have a morality of life — are not these the most basic of the basics for the future?

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